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North Vietnam: Year-end pronouncements from Hanoi suggest that economic achievements during 1969 were modest and that pre-bombing levels of output, at least in some sectors, will not be regained soon.

The plan for 1970 is basically the same as last year's, although there is some increase in the emphasis on the civilian economy. For the first time in years, national defense is not specifically cited as the country's main goal. The need to support the war effort is, however, a recurring theme in speeches on the plan by Le Thanh Nghi, vice premier and chief aid negotiator.

One notable difference between this and last year's plans is the reduced emphasis in 1970 on expanding communication and transportation facilities. Substantial improvements since the bombing restrictions were introduced in March 1968 have presumably permitted the regime to reduce priority for this sector.

The fact that the new plan covers this year only, with no mention of the direction the economy will take beyond 1970, suggests that the uncertainties of the war continue to preclude long-range economic planning.

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Communist China - Japan: Peking appears ready to keep open the channels of communication with Japan despite increased public hostility toward the Sato government.

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Chinese and Japanese trade representatives in Peking have begun to discuss arrangements for the annual round of trade talks.

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This exchange is the first solid evidence that the Chinese are prepared to continue the trade arrangement. It was earlier feared in some Japanese quarters that Peking might terminate the arrangement as a followup to its strongly negative public reaction to the Nixon-Sato communique of last November. Since the communique was issued, however, the Chinese have indicated their willingness to accept an additional Japanese newsman in Peking and have released another Japanese detainee.

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Japan: Radical student groups, beset by internal disputes and financial difficulties, have been forced to abandon their antigovernment struggles for the time being.

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The stunning defeat of the Japan Socialist Party in the December national elections may also be causing some critical examination of violent tactics among the radical leadership. The Socialist decline was partly because of their failure to dissociate themselves from radical violence.

Mindful of the public disgust over the student violence that plagued Japan last year, the other opposition parties, as well as the major labor unions, have gone to great lengths to disclaim any association with the extremist students.

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Nigeria: Federal police units are continuing to move into the former secessionist enclave, and the situation appears to be generally calm. The secessionist delegation that surrendered in Lagos last week has returned to former secessionist territory to reassure the Ibo people of their safety and to help set up an administration there.

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USSR: The Soviet guided-missile helicopter cruiser Moskva is making its first deployment to the Atlantic Ocean. The Moskva, accompanied by two Kashin-class guided-missile ships, passed through the Straits of Gibraltar early on 17 January and is now off the coast of Portugal. There is no indication of the mission or destination of the Moskva group, but it will probably test its equipment and conduct antisubmarine warfare operations while in the Atlantic.

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Ecuador: Ecuador has once again raised the subject of nationalizing a subsidiary of the US-owned International Telephone and Telegraph Company. An official of the Ministry of Public Works has stated that the government wishes to use the profitable international service of All American Cable & Radio Corporation to cover the losses incurred by the state-owned telecommunications company. A similar threat was made last November and it now appears that the government is using the possibility of nationalization as a bargaining weapon in discussions with the parent company for construction of a microwave network and satellite telecommunications earth station. [redacted]

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